



## LOUISIANA SENATE

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CONTACT: SENATE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

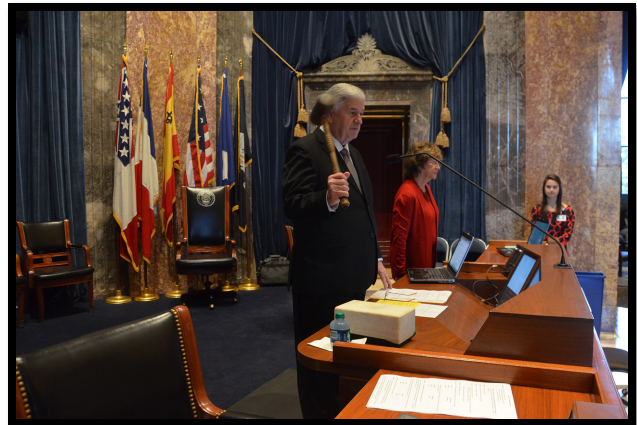
PHONE: 225.342.9737

### **STATE SENATE BEGINS WORK OF 2014 REGULAR SESSION**

#### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, STATE BUDGET, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, PUBLIC SAFETY AND LAWSUIT REFORM ISSUES TOP THE SESSION AGENDA**

Members of the Louisiana State Senate began the work of the 2014 Regular Session of the State Legislature at noon Monday, March 10, 2014. As the State Constitution dictates, the 2014 session is a "general" session where legislators will consider a wide-range of issues except for specific tax and revenue measures. With a broad agenda and the annual responsibility of adopting a balanced state budget, Senate President John A. Alario, Jr. (R - Westwego) expects a particular focus on preparing Louisiana citizens to take advantage of an expected economic boom across the state over the next several years and the tens of thousands of high-paying jobs that will result.

"I believe there will be a great deal of discussion about properly funding higher education and empowering the state's education system to prepare our workforce for the highly-skilled, high-paying jobs that are expected to be created across Louisiana," Senate President Alario said. "We have a tremendous opportunity to give our citizens the tools they need to capitalize on the expected major economic development projects that will be moving forward in the coming months."



In other education-related matters, legislators will debate the proposed new curriculum standards known as Common Core for public schools and the continued viability and availability of the TOPS scholarship program for both college-bound and career-training students.

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As Senate President Pro-Tempore Sharon Weston Broome (D-Baton Rouge) explained, "We are at a point where we must set clear priorities on where we go not just in where we spend taxpayers' dollars, but also where we go with state policy as it relates to our education system at all levels. Beyond that we also must make sure that we are not leaving certain segments of our population behind, especially when it comes to access to quality, affordable healthcare and reform of our corrections system."

Other matters of interest include pre-filed bills that continue the discussion of the expansion of Medicaid to provide healthcare services for more of Louisiana's uninsured who do not qualify for coverage under the federal Affordable Health Care Act. Lawmakers have also filed bills to create a system for the legal use of marijuana for medical purposes, to reform the state's correction system, to change the way civil suits are handled in Louisiana courts, and to limit the ability of governmental entities such as levee boards and flood control authorities to sue for property damages.

Prior to the beginning of the session, legislators pre-filed more than 1500 bills for consideration, 554 in the Senate and 1023 in the House. Legislators may file up to 5 additional measures that deal with "general" issues after the start of the session. The 2014 Regular Session must end by June 2, 2014.

Citizens can follow the work of the 2013 Regular Session on the Internet at [www.senate.la.gov](http://www.senate.la.gov) or [www.legis.la.gov](http://www.legis.la.gov) where they can read and print bills, review committee schedules and agendas and watch legislative proceedings live or through the legislature's video archives. Live broadcasts of legislative proceedings can also be seen weekday afternoons on certain local cable stations participating in LaTV, a cooperative effort of the House, the Senate, Louisiana Public Broadcasting and the Louisiana Cable Television Association.



For citizens visiting the State Capitol, there is free wireless Internet Service available. Also, the updated joint legislative website - [www.legis.la.gov](http://www.legis.la.gov) - includes a new feature that allows citizens to track legislation of interest as issues move through the legislative process.

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## **CITIZEN INFORMATION SERVICES**

Louisiana Senate Information on the Internet

[www.senate.la.gov](http://www.senate.la.gov) or [www.legis.la.gov](http://www.legis.la.gov)

LaTV Broadcasts of Legislative Proceedings

Mon.-Fri. 2:00 PM-6:00 PM (In most areas)

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